

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1-12, 14, 16 and 17 are amended, and claims 18-20 are added. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication that claim 6 and 7 contain allowable subject matter. For at least the reasons discussed below, Applicants submit that all pending claims are allowable.

Claims 7-14 and 16-17 are objected to. Claims 7-10 and 16 are amended to correct typographical errors contained therein. It is respectfully requested that the objection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 16 and 17 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting over claims 1, 9 and 10 of co-pending U.S. Application No. 10/667,497 to Okamoto et al. (Okamoto).

At least because neither application has been identified as being in condition for allowance and because independent claims 1 and 16 have been amended, it is respectfully submitted that even a provisional double patenting rejection is currently premature. It is respectfully requested that the provisional rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1, 13 and 14 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,935,753 to Lehmann et al. (Lehmann); claims 2-5 and 8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lehmann in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,672,705 to Kitahara et al. (Kitahara); claim 9 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lehmann in view of Kitahara and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,708,467 to Yoshikawa et al. (Yoshikawa); claim 10 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lehmann in view of Kitahara and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,517,222 to Sugiyama et al. (Sugiyama); claims 11, 12 and 15 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Lehmann in view of Sugiyama; and claims 16 and 17 are rejected under

35 U.S.C. §103(a) over U.S. Patent No. 5,717,446 to Teumer et al. (Teumer) in view of Kitahara and Sugiyama. The rejections are respectfully traversed for at least the following reasons.

Applicants respectfully submit that Lehmann, Kitahara, Sugiyama, Yoshikawa and Teumer, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all the features recited in independent claim 1 including, *inter alia*, a conveyor belt that conveys a recording medium on a conveying surface thereof, the conveyor belt spanning the plurality of rollers and including a recessed portion that includes a top edge defined by the conveying surface, an ink holding portion that holds ink and comprises a plurality of protrusions projecting from a surface of the recessed portion of the conveyor belt, wherein a top-most portion of each protrusion is below the top edge of the recessed portion.

Lehmann, Kitahara, Sugiyama, Yoshikawa and Teumer, alone or in combination, also fail to disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in independent claim 11 including, *inter alia*, an ink holding portion and an ink removing member that is selectively arrangeable in one of a contacting state where the ink removing member contacts the ink holding member or an un-contacting state where the ink removing member does not contact the ink holding member and the ink removing member being arranged in the contacting state when the ink holding portion is in a position corresponding to any of the plurality of rollers.

In addition, Applicants respectfully submit that Lehmann, Kitahara, Sugiyama, Yoshikawa and Teumer, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest the combination of features recited in independent claim 16 including, *inter alia*, a conveyor belt that conveys a recording medium on a conveying surface thereof, the conveyor belt spanning the plurality of rollers and including a recessed portion that includes a top edge defined by the conveying surface, an ink holding portion that holds ink and comprises a plurality of protrusions projecting from a surface of the recess portion of the conveyor belt, and a drive mechanism

that selectively moves the ink removing member into contact or out of contact with the ink holding portion based on the position of the ink holding portion and a running speed of the conveyor belt detected by the sensor, wherein a top-most portion of each protrusion is below the top edge of the recessed portion.

For at least these reasons, Applicants respectfully submit that Lehmann, Kitahara, Sugiyama, Yoshikawa and Teumer, alone or in combination, fail to disclose or suggest all the features of claims 1, 11 and 16, as well as all the features of claims 2-10, 12-15 and 17-20, which respectively depend from claims 1 and 11. It is respectfully requested that the rejection be withdrawn.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of all pending claims are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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JAO:MMI/ccs

Attachment:

Petition for Extension of Time

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